

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, before line 5, insert the following headings:

--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention--

Page 1, replace the paragraph beginning on line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

--The invention relates to a method of supplying oil from a first floating structure to an offloading structure, comprising the steps of:

providing a flexible duct extending between the two structures at a water depth of between 50m and 500m, the duct comprising a flexible elastomeric material and having an internal diameter of at least 600 mm and a length of between ~~1500~~ 1,500 and ~~3000~~ 3,000 m, and providing at least one pump at the first structure and pumping the oil through the duct at a pressure between 5 bar and 30 bar and at a flow rate between ~~1000~~ 1,000 and ~~50,000 m³/hr~~ 50,000 m³/hr.--

Page 1, between lines 12 and 13, insert the following heading:

--Description of the Related Art--

Page 1, between lines 28 and 29, insert the following heading:

--BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

Page 2, between lines 26 and 27, insert the following heading:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES--

Page 3, before line 1, insert the following heading:

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS--

Page 3, replace the paragraphs beginning on line 12 and ending on page 4, line 6 with the following amended paragraphs:

--Fig. 2a shows a simple catenary configuration of the flexible hose 1, Fig. 2b a wave configuration, Fig. 2c a hybrid configuration with tensioning weights ~~16,17~~ 16 and Fig. 2d a tethered configuration, in which the hose 1 is connected to the sea bed 17 via tethers 18.

Hydrocarbons, such as crude oil, are supplied to the offloading buoy 3 at a rate of for instance ~~50,000~~ 50,000 barrels per hour and a pumping pressure of pump 13 of 18 bar. In the duct, the oil temperature may be 40°C and its viscosity will be about 40 cP. The water temperature at a depth of 200 m will be about ~~140°C~~ 14°C. The temperature isolation of the flexible hose 1, which may be formed of rubber, such as described in WO 02/44607, which application is incorporated herein by reference, is such that the temperature difference between the outlet temperature T_0 of the crude oil at the buoy 3 and the inlet temperature T_{in} of the oil at the floating structure 12 is not more than 15°C, preferably lower than 5°C. The inlet temperature T_{in} may be between 30°C and 70°C. The reduced heat loss results in

a substantially constant viscosity over the length of the hose 1 and hence in improved hydrocarbon flow.

As is shown in Figs. 2a-2d, each time a single flexible hose 1 extends from the first floating structure 12 to the offloading buoy 3. Multiple offloading buoys 3 may be used, at different distances from the floating structure, each time a single large-diameter flexible hose according to the present invention extending from the floating structure to a respective offloading buoy.

As is shown in Fig. 3, the hose 1 may comprise an outer layer 20 of insulating rubber or polystyrene, of a thickness of at least 2 cm. Preferably the layer 20 is a buoyant material. The hose 1 has a wall 21 for instance of steel-reinforced rubber of wall thickness of between 0.5 cm and 1.5 cm. The inner surface of the wall 21 may be provided with a liner of reduced friction characteristics, such as a liner of Nitrile material. The internal diameter D_i of the hose 1 is between 500 mm and 800 mm, the external diameter D_e of the inner hose part is between 100 mm and 200 mm and the outer diameter D_0 is between 600 mm and 1000 mm.--